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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008

In Today's Papers

Ankara Mayor Caught in a Lie as Ankara City Water is Proven Contaminated
Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet, Taraf report that Middle East Technical University (ODTU) Rector Dr. Ural Akbulut made a statement yesterday which refuted claims from the Ankara Municipality and the Mayor's Office that an ODTU lab tested water from the Kizilirmak River and found it to be within the levels that establish water as safe for consumption. Akbulut said that the Ankara Municipality never asked ODTU for an analysis of the city water, which now comes from the Kizilirmak River. In addition, Sabah notes ODTU performed three separate tests in three separate locations last Friday in the Ankara reservoir, the city's water source, and found the arsenic levels in the city water to be two times greater than the maximum limit recommended for water safety.

Editorial Opinion: The Safety of Ankara's Water
Columnist Melih Asik questions the Ankara Mayor's intentions in mainstream Milliyet: "Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek pumped water from the Kizilirmak River into the city water system for fifteen days before informing the public. He justified his behavior by saying 'Nobody got diarrhea.' It seems the Ankara Mayor is very determined to have Ankara people drink arsenic."

Parliament Speaker Toptan's Efforts to Enhance Legislative Power
Hurriyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Aksam: In order to ease the tensions in the Parliament and to enhance its legislative power, Parliament Speaker Koksal Toptan decided to convene a meeting with all party leaders. Prior to the party leader summit, Toptan will meet with the chairmen of each party group and the deputy Parliament speakers today. The summit is expected to be held next week, but is dependent on the prime minister's schedule, reports Hurriyet.

AKP Prepares Defense; DTP Presents Defense to the Constitutional Court Today
All papers report lawyers for the ruling AKP started drafting the party's defense against closure. The defense is scheduled to be presented to the Constitutional Court on June 23rd. Reportedly, the

defense will argue that the prosecutor's allegations are political and not based on concrete evidence.

The mainly pro-Kurdish DTP will present its defense against closure to the Constitutional Court today. Mainstream Sabah and Milliyet report that the party "will ask the judiciary to solve the Kurdish problem." The DTP defense committee prepared a 100-page defense based on political and legal arguments. The political argument outlines the historical development of the Kurdish problem and proposes solutions. In addition, the defense will contend that the PKK is not a terrorist organization and jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was not behind the establishment of the DTP.

Parliament Approves Kurdish Language Broadcast on TRT Television
Mainstream Sabah reports that the Parliament approved a bill yesterday authorizing state-owned TRT television to broadcast in different local languages, including Kurdish. The bill was approved by Parliament, despite the fierce objections from nationalist party MHP. The bill was sent to the President for final approval.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Afghan Donor Conference; POTUS Trip

"Afghanistan will always be on the Agenda"
Fikret Ertan wrote in Islamist leaning Zaman (6/12): "Afghanistan will be the main item on the agendas of two upcoming important international meetings. The Donors' Conference in Paris will address a 5-year development plan for Afghanistan; President Karzai will try to justify the need for additional international aid in order to implement the plan. The budget estimates roughly \$50 billion is needed in international aid, even though Afghan officials realistically expect to receive \$15 billion to \$20 billion. Most

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likely, about 75 percent of this will come from the United States. Since 2001, 40 percent of international aid to Afghanistan has not reached the country's infrastructure; instead, these funds were used to pay contractors or consultants, who mostly came from the donor countries and often profited from their contract deals. The Paris Conference will discuss this issue and address specific cases of corruption in aid distribution. Thus, the main theme of the meeting will focus on the transfer of aid directly to the Afghan government and ensuring the aid is used properly. Along with the Paris Conference, the NATO Defense Ministers will also discuss Afghanistan and its security-related problems. Therefore, it seems Afghanistan will be on the international agenda for the long road ahead."

"Bidding Farewell"

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet (6/12): "This week's tour of Europe is seen as President Bush's farewell tour since it is likely to be the last time he will visit Europe as President. While he tempered his rhetoric just before he embarked on his latest journey, Bush is still an unwelcome leader in the European public. Europeans, in fact, are happy Bush is going to leave office soon; they also hope for a better relationship with the next President. Had Bush expressed his current opinions when he took office, he would enjoy a much better image vis-`-vis the European public. However, when he took office he pursued a line of pride and insolence. The occupation of Iraq and its aftermath has proven to be the worst example of his unilateralism. Even though his days in the White House are numbered, there are still some pending international decisions which President Bush will have to address. Iran is certainly the main one. During his European tour, President Bush primarily focused on Iran and he even signed a memorandum of understanding with the EU to intensify efforts to force Iran to abandon its nuclear armament program. According to this agreement, in the event diplomatic efforts fail, a series of sanctions will be imposed upon Iran. However, it is unclear how long diplomatic efforts will be pursued and how new sanctions will be applied. It is obvious that Europeans are more cautious about using force than President Bush. This is not only about Iran; this issue carries major repercussions for the entire Middle East."

French Senate Committee Votes against Turkey Referendum.
Media outlets praise the French Senate Foreign Relations Committee for vetoing a proposal calling for a public referendum regarding the EU membership of any country whose population is 5% over the entire

population of the EU. Turkey was the clear target of this proposal, as Turkey is the only candidate country that meets such conditions. While French President Sarkozy was reputed to support the bill, it remains to be seen if the Parliament will accept or reject the Committee's recommendation to veto the bill. In "The Senate Vetoed the Turkey Referendum," mainstream Sabah reports the Committee vetoed the proposal to "let the French public vote on whether to consider Turkey for full membership to the EU," and "next week the Parliament will vote on whether or not to accept the Committee's recommendation." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the headline, "Imposing Conditions to Turkey Will Damage Bilateral Relations," and reports, "the proposal to impose conditions on Turkey has suffered a setback due to the Senate Committee's view that such a referendum would negatively affect bilateral relations." In "Senate Gives Support to Turkey," liberal Radikal notes, "The Foreign Affairs Committee noted the referendum would seriously damage relations." In "The Senate Deals a Blow to the Turkey Proposal," Islamist Zaman reports, "Prior to the Committee meeting, French President Nicholas Sarkozy was in favor of the referendum, but interestingly enough, the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Josselin De Rohan, told the press the Committee's decision was unanimous and Sarkozy agreed with the decision." Mainstream Hurriyet notes the Senate Committee emphasized, "this referendum targets France's friend and ally, Turkey," and "this could lead to serious damage in our diplomatic relations." Leftist Taraf reports, "There are some in France who love Turkey."

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Bush 'Confesses His Sins.'

Media outlets carry President Bush's comments during a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday in which he said "I am not warmonger." Coverage is measurably cynical. Mainstream Sabah's headline reads, "Bush Confesses His Sins in Europe," and the article reports Bush claimed, "I am misunderstood."

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports in "Bush Is Regretful, Supposedly," that, "Bush claims the world misunderstands him." In "Bush Still Insists Iran Is a Threat As He Voiced Regret for Iraq," liberal Radikal reports, "even if there are promises to conduct diplomacy with Iran, all options are on the table."

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The Line between the U.S. and Iran Rests on a Nuclear Gamble," and notes Bush finds "the isolation of the Iranian people to be a good solution." Leftist Taraf's headline reads, "Everyone misunderstands The 'Man of Peace,'" as "Bush's Mind Is Still On Iran." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the front page headline, "He Made A Mess Of Iraq, And Now He Confesses His Sins," saying, "I'm Not a Warmonger," but the paper carries a cartoon of Bush dressed in fatigues.

A Cartoon under the headline, "I'm Not a Warmonger," from Cumhuriyet's front page today.

Illegal Somali Immigrants Abandoned at Lake Buyukcekmece
Mainstream Vatan, leftist Taraf, and Islamist Zaman report that human traffickers abandoned 17 illegal immigrants, including 10 women, on the shores of Lake Buyukcekmece in Istanbul after charging \$10,000 per person for passage to a Greek Island. The Somali people fled their country a month ago by ship, went to Iraq, and then crossed to Turkey, adds Vatan.

TV Highlights
NTV

Domestic News

A shipyard in Tuzla is shut down for five days for violating job safety regulations.

The mainly pro-Kurdish DTP will hold its party convention on July 120.

The suit against DTP Deputy Aysel Tugluk regarding a speech in Dogubeyazit was suspended because of her Parliamentary immunity.

174 refugees at the Kirklareli Gaziosmanpasa Refugee camp took a police officer hostage and seized his weapon. Additional security

forces were sent to the camp in order to restore stability.

International News

President Gul and Croation President Mesic agree to boost efforts for establishing a lasting peace in Southeastern Europe.

The Israeli Parliament Knesset passed the first reading of a bill stating that people who have visited an enemy country cannot be elected to Parliament.

WILSON